

KEENEY NEWS

**From the desk of:
Julie Martin-Beaulieu, Principal**

Dear Keeney Community,

This month you will read about our Social Emotional Learning Curriculum with highlights from each grade level. This curriculum is designed to support our students as they develop skills to regulate their emotions, acknowledge the impact they have on their social environment, and strengthen their capacity to contribute to a community that is healthy, happy, and safe for each member. In light of recent events following the election, I believe this is a timely and important focus for us.

The past few months have been a challenge for many of us who, throughout this campaign season, experienced a range of emotions from fear to exuberance. We have also been forced to contend with questions that are not easily answered, often asked of us by our children. Children who are looking to us for answers, direction, and in some cases comfort. I appreciate the struggle of the parent in this environment as I too am a mom and am answering those questions as well. But in addition to answering the questions of my own children, as Principal I am also answering the questions of your children.

During my Wednesday morning announcements on November 9, I did my best to acknowledge the results of the election while also acknowledging the reality that many children who were listening to me were coming from families who were grieving the loss of their candidate. And many children who were listening to me were coming from families who were celebrating the victory of their candidate. My own children were listening to me, carrying the emotions of my family. As I was preparing for that announcement, I was reminded more acutely of the fact that I stand in service to all families; to all of you. I am your principal and am charged with the great responsibility of ensuring you and your child a safe and happy place at Keeney.

My message to our children on Wednesday morning was a message of community. In this great country of ours, we get to come together in school to sit alongside people who may think differently than we do, who may look different from us, and who may be having different feelings than we are having, and we get to do that in a place of safety and acceptance. My message to you - my partners in this work - is to continue to promote kindness, respect, and acceptance in your homes so that the conversations coming from home to school support the values of community that we embrace.

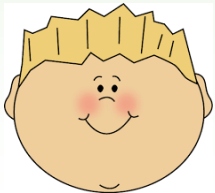
Our school is one of great diversity, varied strengths, and multiple gifts. We are filled with families representing many ethnic, religious, cultural, and political backgrounds. So too is our country. Right now our country is struggling with unity around our differences. I believe we would have been struggling regardless of the outcome of this election. My concern is not about the details of politics, but rather the dignity of people and as such, I am compelled to make a promise to you. I promise to continue to hold our students and staff members to the expectation that all members of our community are honored and treated with respect. I promise to continue to celebrate the diversity that exists within the walls of our classrooms. I promise to continue to promote kindness, and to cultivate a school community that you are proud and comforted to send your children to.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, concerns or thoughts that you have regarding this. I welcome all opportunities to strengthen our community.

Kindergarten

Our Kindergartners spent September talking about what it means to listen with their whole bodies. Sometimes kids may be listening with their ears but their head is turned away, their body may be fidgety or elsewhere. Behaviors like this send a nonverbal message to others that the child is not listening and part of the group. Kindergartners learned that listening with their whole bodies means, eyes are watching, ears are listening, voices are quiet and hands and feet are still.

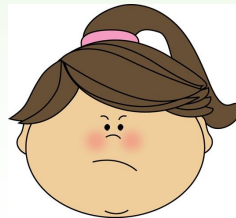
Now we are working in our unit on Thinking Thoughts and Feeling Feelings. Social learning is all about thoughts and feelings. The ability to think about others, play collaboratively and establish friendships is all about thoughts; knowing our own, sharing them with others and taking others' thoughts into account as we act and react. The children have been introduced to the ideas that we think thoughts in our brains and feel feelings in our hearts. We have talked about noticing our own feelings and the feelings of others and we have worked on identifying the thoughts that caused the feelings. We have discussed the feelings happy, sad, mad, and scared. We looked at each feeling separately and discussed the causes of those feelings. We also talked about the difference between big feelings and little feelings. We have read lots of great stories centered around these feelings and students have participated in songs, activities and writing about their feelings.



Happy



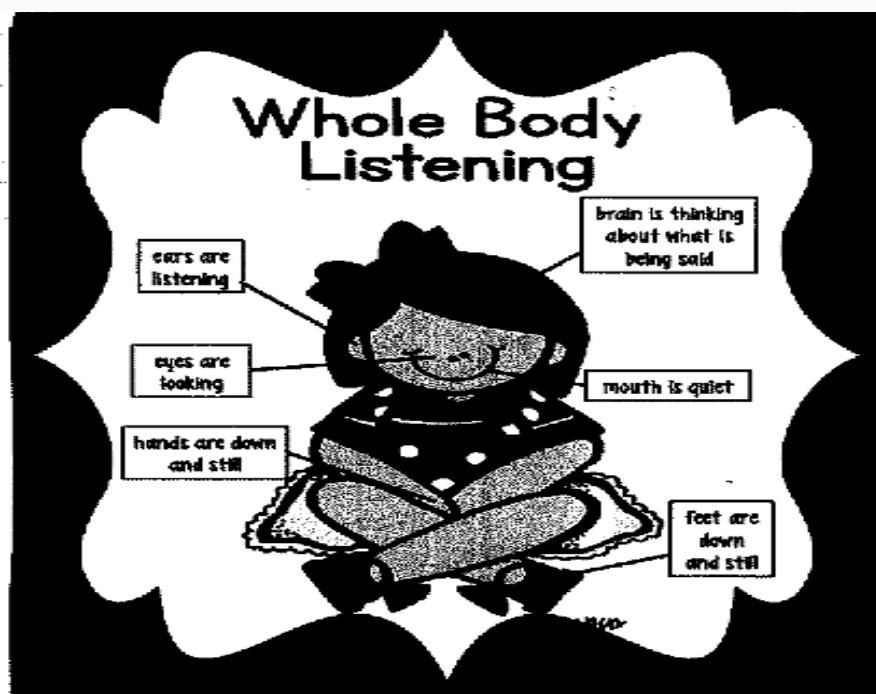
Sad



Mad



Scared





First Grade

First graders have been busy learning about hidden rules and expected and unexpected behaviors. We have learned that there are many hidden rules for

different places and situations. Hidden rules are expected behaviors that we understand without being told. Students shared with us hidden rules at their home. Some of the hidden rules include no jumping on the couch, don't jump off the stairs, don't stay on your i-pads too long, put away your toys when you use them, don't go outside by yourself, don't disturb dad when he is working, don't slam the door and don't go on top of the pool table.

Many hidden rules were related to food. These include no playing with your food at the kitchen table, no eating upstairs, no sneaking food, no eating dessert until you finish dinner, and no snacks before dinner.

When we do these expected behaviors, it gives others and us good thoughts. No matter where we are, we can always think with our

eyes to figure out the hidden rules.



Grade 2

Second graders are continuing to learn about social thinking through our Social Thinking Curriculum and Superflex. The goal of this curriculum is to provide a fun, motivating way to improve the children's social and behavioral flexibility, which in turn will help them develop better self-monitoring for their social behavior.

Our first unit began with whole body listening, and how whole body listening helps everyone feel good about being together and learning. One of their favorite lessons around whole body listening was learning about Listening Larry. The students created their own Whole Body Listening Larry and identified all the body parts that should be listening.

The next unit of social learning was all about thinking thoughts and feelings. The children learned that our brain and heart are two parts we use around people. They discovered how their brain is their thought maker, and their heart is their feelings keeper. One of their favorite lessons around thinking thoughts and feeling feelings was creating a feelings book. Here are a few snippets from several children's books:

Emma feels scared when her brother jumps out of the corner.

Alycia feels happy when she is playing at recess with Victoria.

Romeo feels scared when he goes to a haunted house.

Leah feels happy when mom makes bacon.

Averie feels scared when she gets shots.

Some ways to support and reinforce these concepts at home with your children is to identify thoughts and label more emotions such as curious, frustrated, excited, worried, confused, silly, calm, etc.



Social thinkers in third grade are learning to be social detectives! People have different kinds of smarts that are strengths and weaknesses. We use social smarts all the time in many different settings throughout our day. Students are learning that thoughts and feelings are different but related. We are also learning that expected behaviors give others good thoughts and feelings, while unexpected behaviors give others uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. Finally, as detectives, we know that we can change our behaviors to change others thoughts and feelings about us using our social memory.



This year in fourth grade the Keeney Cubs have



been strengthening their social thinking skills using the book, Social Thinking and Me. We have worked on being flexible thinkers, following hidden rules, and using our eyes and ears to make social decisions. The fourth graders have an understanding of expected behaviors in

different situations both in and out of school. The students can also identify with the Unthinkables to evaluate situations and use their SuperFlex strategies to defeat their Unthinkable Team, keeping them on track through different situations. Students understand that doing the expected behaviors give others good thoughts and feelings about

them. We continue to role play and think in "what if" situations to build our social thinking minds.

Grade 5

5th grade students are working diligently on identifying their individual strength within the Social Thinking Curriculum. From there, 5th grade students will then determine how to share their strength with fellow Keeney Cubs. Thus far, students have decided to write books, create power points, craft and direct skits - all with the intent on helping their classmates grow to be their best selves.

Elizabeth Swan Literacy Coach

Parent-teacher conferences are next week and those conferences are just one way for parents to keep up with their child's progress.

But there is much to learn before and between conferences as well. In order for your child to learn effectively and do well in school, it's important for there to be good communication between parents and teachers. You have a lot of information about your child that teachers need to know in order to teach your child effectively. At the same time, it's important for you as a parent to know what your child is learning in school and how he/she is doing.

Here are some things you can do to keep up with what your child is doing at school:

- Listen to what your child tells you about school and treat everything he/she tells you with importance. Your child may tell you about the kid who got hurt in gym class or the kid who has behavioral issues instead of talking about his/her studies, but that's okay. Everything your child tells you lets you know something about the world he/she lives in while at school.
- Ask questions of your own, but wait until there is a time when you are ready to listen and your child is ready to talk. Try talking over dinner or right before bedtime. Ask specific questions like, "Did you learn any new vocabulary words today?" "Who did you play with at recess?" "What was the best part of your day?" or "What was the most interesting thing you learned today?" Ask questions about your child's teacher and classmates as well as about schoolwork.
- Write down your child's comments about his/her teacher, classroom activities, etc. Also, write down any concerns you have throughout the year. Before going to a conference, read through these notes to refresh your memory. If your child says nice things about his/her teacher, write those down as well-and make sure to tell the teacher. A teacher needs positive feedback too!
- Attend school or classroom events and activities. All of these will help you to understand your child's school day.

Parents are a child's first and most influential teachers! Keep in contact with your child's teacher and your child will have a successful year!

Parent Conferences 1:17 pm Dismissal

Tuesday November 15, 2016

Wednesday November 16, 2016

Thursday November 17, 2016

Mrs. Soloperto
STEM Grades K–2

Things in STEM are running smoothly as we move along in our first science units. Kindergarten continues to learn and explore the world around them using their five senses. So far, we have used periscopes outside to learn about using our sense of sight, have used pumpkins and gourds to learn about using our sense of touch to feel different textures and have been using our noses to investigate how different items like popcorn and coffee smell. Soon, we will try to use our sense of sound to figure out what objects are hiding inside different eggs!

First graders have been working hard in their unit all about forces and motion. We have observed the motion that is needed to spin both pinwheels and tops and have even had a chance to create our own tops to bring home. Recently, the students in first grade have taken a look at how marbles and toy cars move and soon will be taking a look at friction and the energy and force needed to move objects down a hill or ramp.

Students in our second grade have been continuing to learn all about matter. We have learned about how some solids can be stacked and how some can roll. We also have explored which types of solids are magnetic and have had a chance to learn about how to use a spring scale to weigh solid objects. Soon, the second graders will be introduced to liquids and what makes them different from solids and all about what their unique properties are.

Hope that everyone has been having a wonderful fall. Here's a link to a fun experiment so you can try some more science at home!

<http://www.education.com/activity/article/candy-corn-science/>



Friday December 9, 2016

All students, parents, and staff are encouraged to wear their pajamas to school/work all day on Friday, December 9th.

A \$1 (or more) donation is SUGGESTED, but not required, to wear pj's that day.



Happy November to all our Keeney Families. It's hard to believe we are heading into the holidays. We have some fun events planned for November.

**The Fall Mixer will be held on
Friday, November 18th from 6:00 - 8:00pm
in the Keeney Gym.**

Everyone (including adults) is encouraged to break out those costumes and wear them to the Mixer. There will be games, music, dancing, a costume contest and snacks. The event is free except that we'd like everyone to bring a non-perishable food item that can be donated to the MACC food pantry. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

Our November Spirit Day will be held on Wednesday, November 23rd. The theme will be Wacky Wednesday so put your imaginations to work and put together a fun outfit for the day. There are only two rules: the student must be able to comfortably participate in the classroom and they must wear sturdy shoes (no slippers). A \$1 donation to the PTA is appreciated.

We are busy planning the **Holiday Shop for Friday, December 16th.** It's a very fun event for the students. We will need volunteers to help setup the night before and to wrap during the event. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

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